

AB 1548 – Electronic Textbook Pilot Program

Assemblymember Fran Pavley

IN BRIEF

Authorizes 12 schools to use a variety of funds to purchase electronic versions of textbooks from publishers. Benefits include enhanced instruction for students, lightweight alternatives to heavy backpacks and the potential for reduced textbook costs.

THE ISSUE

Currently, publishers are not required to make texts available in electronic format and districts don't have the statutory authority to order electronic format texts from publishers. During the 2003 textbook adoption cycle only one publisher made one book available on cd-rom.

EXISTING LAW

Existing law is permissive as to whether or not publishers make an entire textbook available in electronic format. Some publishers provide supplemental cd-roms but educators would like to enhance their instruction by utilizing entire textbooks in an electronic format.

THE SOLUTION

AB 1548 creates a pilot program for 12 regular and low-performing schools located throughout the state enabling them to receive from publishers textbooks in an electronic format. Elementary, middle, and high schools are all eligible to apply.

The Department of Education will be responsible for administering the pilot program. Four schools will be selected from each region of the state: north, central, south. In each region two of the schools will be rural, and two will be urban or suburban. At least one of the schools in each region will be low-performing (deciles 1-3).

The department will evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program by 2011 and report the results to the Governor and legislature.

BACKGROUND

This bill is consistent with State Board of Education recommendations that were adopted at their May 2004, meeting: “the State Board should consider requiring publishers to provide local districts with options for lighter-weight materials, such as ... electronic editions... by requiring publishers to provide this option, then districts, which are in the best position to judge the needs of their students, can choose the solutions that are best suited to their particular situation.”

The Children’s Partnership recently completed a study titled, “Measuring Digital Opportunity for America’s Children.” The study found that of the 46 million 7-17 year olds in the U.S., 77% live in homes with a personal computer, and 90% use a computer at school. The study’s findings include strong evidence that information and communications technology “can have positive and measurable outcomes in young people’s education, health, workforce skills development, and civic participation.”

In 2002, Maine’s legislature and Independent Governor provided every junior high student with a laptop as part of the Maine Learning Technology Initiative. Reports from nine pilot schools that received laptops indicate positive results: attendance has increased and discipline problems have decreased.

SUPPORT

Assoc. of CA School Administrators, CA School Boards Assoc., California Reading Association, Las Virgenes Unified School District, American Electronics Association, Apple Computers, California Community Technology Policy Group

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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